

ETHNOGRAPHY OF UNEMPLOYED MEN
AND THE UNEMPLOYED



The London School of Economics and Political Science

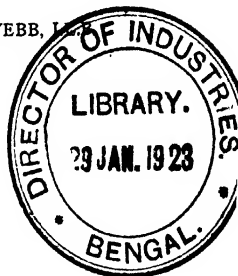
A BIBLIOGRAPHY
OF
UNEMPLOYMENT AND
THE UNEMPLOYED.

PREPARED BY

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WITH A PREFACE BY SIDNEY WEBB, L.F.S.



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PREFACE

THE list here presented to the student, of nearly eight hundred books, reports, pamphlets and articles relating to the problem of Unemployment, is, of course, very far, alike in form and in content, from being a proper bibliography of the subject. It is, in fact, no more than a summary guide to the principal publications of the United Kingdom, and to some of those of France, Germany, Italy and the United States, for the most part within the last quarter of a century. The items referred to are not all to be found in any one library, not even in the magnificent collection of the British Museum, the courteous assistance of which institution is gratefully acknowledged. The greater number are in the British Library of Political Science, in connection with the London School of Economics and Political Science, where they are accessible not only to students of that institution, but also to any serious inquirer. The present list, prepared in the first instance for some members of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and on the Relief of Distress from Unemployment (1905-9), and revised for the use of the Research Department of the National Committee to Promote the Break Up of the Poor Law, is now placed at the disposal of a wider circle.

Perhaps the most serious deficiency in the list is its lack of historical perspective. We are always apt to suppose that Unemployment is peculiarly a problem of to-day, and such a mistaken impression might easily be fostered by the incomplete character of the present list. To remove that impression it would be useful if some student would supplement Miss Taylor's work by compiling a corresponding list, which would be a lengthy one, of publications on Unemployment during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—to go no farther back into mediæval darkness—and during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century. It might be interesting to recall how the Corporation of the City of London under the Commonwealth petitioned the Government for the grant of some of the "herring-

busses" captured from the Dutch, in order that the Unemployed of London might be sent herring fishing into the German Ocean. I have never been able to ascertain the fate of the unhappy victims of this experiment. It might be profitable once more to recount the philanthropic attempts to provide useful work for the Unemployed, by men like Firmin and Haines of the latter part of the seventeenth century, and John Cary of the beginning of the eighteenth; and the extent to which these projects had the sanction of John Locke and the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations who were the "Board of Trade" of the period. We might find some parallel to our own day in the frequency with which at that time the subject found its way into the King's Speech at the opening of each session of Parliament; if not also in the exiguity of the legislative harvest! And during all the eighteenth century the repetition, every few years, of "bread riots" and demonstrations of Spitalfields weavers, and other local outbursts of desperate unemployed men—of miners and colliers and stockingers and woollen weavers—would remind us once more that Unemployment, and chronic "Under-employment" as we now term it, antedated the "machine industry," the "world commerce" and the "Industrial Revolution". At the close of the eighteenth century, in "the double panic of famine and revolution," we see Parliament even voting hundreds of thousands of pounds to be shovelled out in grants to the Unemployed at Bethnal Green and elsewhere; and the first half of the nineteenth century witnessed repeated collections of money from the benevolent—"Mansion House Funds," as we should now term them, which occasionally exceeded a quarter of a million sterling—for the unemployed "manufacturers". There were, even at that date, Parliamentary Committees and Royal Commissions on the subject, on whose reports the dust lies thick.

Possibly no one has read, and no one ever will read, all the works mentioned in this list. A mere glance through their titles, joined with any appreciation of the historical persistence of the problem for at least three centuries, is enough to fill the reformer with diffidence, if not with despair. Yet the present writer, whose lot it has been, during the past ten years, to look through the greater part of these publications, derives from them, not despair, but a sure and abiding hope. The problem is not insoluble. The difficulties are not insuperable. The long succession of students and experimenters, of critics and enthusiasts, whose writings are here recorded, have not spent their painful efforts in vain. We owe to them, often against

their own prepossessions and in the teeth of their own words, the gradual elucidation of the problem, the mapping out of the territory, the warning against innumerable "blind alleys," the exploration of all the practical difficulties, the achievement of truly monumental failures, and the attainment, here and there, of fragmentary successes which are full of significance for us. It is vain to seek to distinguish exactly what each effort, each experiment, each criticism and each study has added to the edifice of our knowledge of the problem. But the present writer takes to himself the hazardous privilege of asserting that, in his judgment, the recent work of Mr. W. H. Beveridge, and, in particular, the discovery, in the necessary conditions of unorganised Casual Employment, of the actual cause of the permanent existence of a surplus of chronically "under-employed" labourers, puts the coping-stone to the structure. The problem is now soluble, theoretically at once, and practically as soon as we care to solve it.

A practical solution of the problem of the Unemployed—in the sense of obviating the social evils connected with Unemployment—must necessarily take an administrative form. Three centuries ago—even one century ago—it would have been impossible, had the necessary knowledge of the problem then have been obtained, to have put the solution into any practicable form, because the proportionate magnitude of the evil, relatively to the available social forces, was too great. The machinery of national and local government, and the means at its disposal, would have been quite inadequate to the task. To-day, though our social mechanism is still very far from perfect, it has already gained such a grip that it is capable of more. Moreover, the proportionate magnitude of the task to be accomplished, relatively to our social resources, is now smaller than ever before. The problem, in short, has become practicably manageable.

Thus it is that the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission contains the words—surely the most pregnant of hope that have ever been included in such a document—"*We have to report that, in our judgment, it is now administratively possible, if it is sincerely wished to do so, to remedy most of the evils of Unemployment, to the same extent, at least, as we have in the past century diminished the death rate from fever and lessened the industrial slavery of young children*".¹ Unfortunately, though exactly as might have been expected by any

¹ Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress, Minority Report, Part II., Ch. V., Section F (Cd. 4499).

student of the seven or eight hundred publications herein recorded, the solution of the problem is to be found in no simple panacea. The practical proposals for remedying the complicated evils of Unemployment are necessarily themselves complex. For any adequate presentment of them the student must turn to the Minority Report itself, and particularly to the final chapter of its second part, which has now been separately published.¹ But as this introduction will come into the hands of many who will not see the Minority Report, I venture to give, by way of summarising the position to which the seven or eight hundred publications here enumerated have led, a bare and unconvincing abstract of the proposals now made.

We have first to realise that although the percentage of unemployed workers (as shown in the trade union returns) varies enormously from year to year, and even from month to month, it never, even in times of the greatest industrial prosperity, falls in the United Kingdom below about 2½ per cent. of the trades for which alone we have statistics. Quite apart, therefore, from unemployment due to general fluctuations of trade, we have always with us an army amounting probably to one or two or even three hundred thousand of men who are out of work. The problem, therefore, divides itself naturally into two, the first being that presented by this constantly existing army, and the second that presented by the reserve battalions which are thrown on the streets during periods of slack trade. As regards the actual individuals concerned, the two problems merge imperceptibly into one another; but for the purpose of finding a solution they must be treated as wholly distinct.

If we analyse the constantly existing army of the Unemployed—made up, it must be remembered, of constantly changing individuals—we find that it may be divided into four sections: (a) Those who have lately been in definite situations of presumed permanence—as, for instance, a gardener, an engine-driver, or a cotton operative; (b) those who normally shift from job to job with more or less interval between, but each job lasting for some weeks, or perhaps months, as, for instance, a bricklayer or a contractor's navvy; (c) those who normally earn a bare subsistence by casual jobs lasting only a few hours each or a day or two at most, as, for instance, the dock and wharf labourers and the "casual hands" who form a fringe

¹ *The Scheme of Reform, Part II., Unemployment* (National Committee to Promote the Break Up of the Poor Law, 5 and 6 Clement's Inn, London. Price 3d.).

round most industries; and (2) those who have been ousted or have wilfully withdrawn themselves from the ranks of the workers, like the vagrants and unemployables of all sorts. Each of these four sections needs its special remedy, and we will therefore discuss in order the circumstances of each and the method by which the Minority Report proposes to deal with them.

The men from permanent situations are workers who have filled one good place, and are, presumably, capable of filling others, if such can be found for them. Their chief need in ordinary cases is for some prompt and gratuitous machinery for discovering where openings exist and for assisting migration. This can only be provided—and, we may hope, soon will be provided—by a complete system of public labour exchanges on a national basis, with branches in every centre of employment, and with facilities, not merely for bringing employers and workmen together, but also for ascertaining conclusively that no openings exist for work of any particular kind. It may often happen that a man of excellent character has lost a permanent situation through the death or bankruptcy of his employer, or through the introduction of some new machine which has superseded his particular form of manual skill, and that he has, in fact, no chance of ever finding another situation of the same kind. For such a man, if he is to be rescued from the demoralisation of prolonged unemployment, the first requisite is that he should be convinced of the impossibility of getting a job at his old trade; the second, that he should be put in the way of learning a new one, and in the meantime be adequately maintained—a question to which we shall return later on.

For the men of discontinuous employment the same machinery is needed for discovering quickly, gratuitously, and with certainty where labour is required. With such machinery it would be possible almost completely to prevent the constant "leakage" between one job and the next; and entirely to obviate the demoralising, aimless search for work which is an ever-recurring and characteristic incident in the life of the navy or building trade operative.

But there is a special type of discontinuous employment presented by those trades which have fairly regular fluctuations in the volume of work according to the season of the year. These seasonal trades are very numerous and the amount of unemployment due to them is considerable, but fortunately their slack periods are by no means simultaneous; on the contrary, they appear to be largely complementary. Thus, building is at its height in summer when

gas-making is at a minimum, the busiest month for dock labourers and coal-miners is the slackest for the furnishing trades, and so on, and *vice versâ*. Indeed, it seems highly probable that the total volume of employment in all the industries of the country is approximately uniform throughout the year. Already a certain amount of unorganised "dovetailing" occurs. The hop gardens, for example, draw every September 20,000 workers from other occupations; and a certain number of men alternate seasonally between the gas-works of East and South London and the docks. But with a National Labour Exchange system in effective operation this "dovetailing" of one seasonal trade into another could be enormously increased, at any rate so far as the unskilled labour is concerned, thus securing much greater continuity of employment throughout the year for those persons who were employed at all. Here again, however, after the Labour Exchanges had done their work there would remain a surplus of workers to be dealt with in some way, perhaps trained and drafted into some altogether new industry.

The casual and under-employed labourers present the most difficult and fundamental problem of all, the one which has hitherto baffled all investigators, and ruined all experiments. We are here face to face with a whole population of manual workers who, year in year out, are continuously in a state of partial destitution owing to their chronic failure to get a full week's work. In its social effects this state is perhaps even worse than that of complete Unemployment in the ordinary sense. It is one of the conditions of his employment that the casual labourer should spend a large proportion of his time looking for work or waiting till his services are wanted; but he does not get paid for this part of his time. Thus, although the actual wage received per hour may be reasonable enough, the total average income per week derived from casual employment is generally such as to involve all the evils of sweating plus the additional evil of frequent and demoralising periods of idleness. One of the most serious social facts exposed in the Minority Report is that it is from amongst this class of under-employed casual labourers that most of the able-bodied pauperism and nearly all the problems of the medical officers of health arise. Casual employment, in short, is the chief contributing factor in the creation of new paupers which is constantly going on.

This chronic oversupply of casual labour in relation to local demand is due, as has been shown by the admirable researches of

Mr. W. H. Beveridge, to the method by which employers engage their casual workers. The glaring example of the Liverpool dockers may be as taken as typical. These men are taken on at irregular and uncertain hours as required, at eighteen different "stands" situated at a considerable distance from each other. Each "stand" supplies labour to a certain group of shipowners, and tends to collect around it enough labourers to satisfy the demand of that group on their busiest day. The individual labourers usually stick to one "stand," partly from habit, partly from fear of losing their hold on the goodwill of the foreman, who always likes to keep a large reserve of labour within call. Now, since the busiest days of the different "stands" do not occur simultaneously, this system, by preventing the free flow of labour all over the port, results in a far greater number of men being kept hanging round the stands than can possibly be required simultaneously in the port as a whole. Thus it has been estimated that there are something like 15,000 dock labourers in Liverpool, all of whom get occasional jobs; whereas the port as a whole never, on its very busiest day, needs more than 10,000. This case is only one of many. All over the country, and in connection with all sorts of trades, there are these unnecessarily large reserves, these "stagnant pools" of casual labour. To quote Mr. Beveridge, "The main force keeping together this under-employed reserve of labour is the casual demand of a multiplicity of individual employers". Each employer has his own group of hangers-on at his gate, instead of all employers sharing a common reserve drawn from one centre.

The remedy, then, is obvious—a common reserve. If casual labour is to be organised and decasualised, there must be some centre at which all employers shall engage the men whom they require for casual jobs; and that centre must clearly be the public Labour Exchange. This will perhaps involve a certain amount of inconvenience for employers who have been accustomed to finding an unlimited supply of labour at their gates; but in view of the manifest social evils which the present system directly entails, the employers will be getting off lightly indeed if the community asks no more of them than this. Even for this, however, compulsion will doubtless be necessary, and the Minority Report therefore recommends that resort to the public Labour Exchange should be made legally compulsory for employers filling situations of less than a month's duration. This would reduce to a minimum the extent of those

reserves of unskilled and undifferentiated labour which are required in all fluctuating industries, and would confine within reasonable limits the problem of providing a regular wage for this class of workers.

But the abolition of Under-employment, however it be accomplished, will necessarily involve the squeezing out altogether, once and for all, of a large number of men who, although they succeed now, owing to the absence of organisation, in picking up occasional jobs, are not really required for the work to be done. The distribution of employment in every industry dealt with will be changed and concentrated, with highly beneficial results to those who remain employed; but at the same time a definite surplus of workers will have been created, and will have to be otherwise provided for.

Finally, we come to the Unemployables, the "can't works" and the "won't works". The prevalence of this type in the ranks of the Unemployed has, no doubt, often been exaggerated. But, however large the class may be at any given moment, there is no question but that it is constantly being recruited from the ranks of the other classes just dealt with. The man from a permanent situation ultimately loses hope, and goes under in one way or another; the man of discontinuous employment finds his search for work from town to town indefinitely prolonged, and settles down to the life and standards of the professional tramp; the casual labourer has a spell of ill-luck, and finally succumbs to the demoralising conditions of his employment.

A further source from which the Unemployables are recruited is to be found in the present system of employing boys and youths in uneducative and unpromising situations. Large numbers of youths are employed between the ages of fourteen and eighteen in industries which have come to depend almost entirely on boy labour, discharging them as soon as they ask for men's wages. They may be messengers or newspaper sellers or unskilled factory hands or telegraph boys, but they are alike in this, that they are learning no useful trade which will serve to support them when they become men; and consequently they are almost bound, sooner or later, to join the ranks of the unskilled casual workers and to be among the first to sink from those ranks into the even lower class which we are considering.

Indeed, of all the sources of the Unemployable the system of employing youths for profit when they ought to be learning a trade ranks with the casual labour system as by far the most prolific.

When once we have got casual labour decasualised and have substantially curtailed the exploitation of young persons as cheap labour by raising the age for half-time employment, and insisting upon everybody learning a useful trade, the problem of the genuinely Unemployable will become manageable.

In the meantime, however, we have to recognise their existence, and make some provision for them ; and for the purpose of considering how this may be done we may conveniently class the Unemployables with the surpluses of labour which will be left over when the labour market is properly organised and the maximum demand of each industry under existing conditions has been satisfied.

It is clear that the organisation of the labour market, the suppression of under-employment and the decasualisation of casual labour cannot be undertaken until we have some means of providing for the not inconsiderable surplus of workers of all trades or no trade which will thereby be revealed as totally unemployed and unwanted. We need to find some way of getting this surplus back into regular employment at wages. It so happens that there are three social reforms of great importance which the Minority Report recommends upon their own merits, and which would tend to increase considerably the general demand for labour.

The first of these is the reduction of boy and girl labour already referred to. If with the object of cutting off the supply of Unemployables we require boys and girls under eighteen years of age to spend at least half their time in physical and technological training, adapted to the needs of their future industrial life, we shall at the same time produce a number of openings for adult men and women in situations previously filled by boys and girls.

The second reform relates to the employment of mothers of young families. Such employment is very extensive, and is largely due to the necessity for supplementing the family income in the households of the Under-employed and in the households of widows to whom the guardians are giving insufficient outdoor relief. This necessity will largely cease when all the men actually employed at all are getting five or six days' work a week ; and when, in accordance with the proposals of the first part of the Minority Report, all widows with young children are receiving a sufficient allowance for the proper support of the family group. We may therefore count upon a considerable voluntary withdrawal of wives and mothers from industrial wage-earning, leaving many vacancies to be filled by men.

The third method proposed for increasing the general demand for labour is the reduction of the hours worked by those employed on railways, tramways and omnibuses. The hours of the workers in all these services amount to twelve, fourteen, and sometimes even eighteen out of the twenty-four, and are generally greatly in excess of what is socially desirable. The reform is therefore needed for its own sake; but when it is carried out it will have the additional advantage of actually increasing the number of men required in occupations where employment is exceptionally stable and regular.

It is not, of course, suggested that the particular work hitherto done by the boys and girls, by the mothers of families, and by the railway and tramway workers should be given to the particular men displaced by decasualisation. What would happen would be that each employer would rearrange his employment of labour and take on in the ordinary way, as additional hands, the most efficient men whom he could obtain. Thus these three important reforms, if undertaken concurrently with the suppression of Under-employment, would undoubtedly enable the National Labour Exchange to find places, not necessarily for the particular men thereby displaced, but for a number of men equivalent to a large proportion of the surplus thereby revealed.

A certain proportion of this surplus at any given moment would no doubt consist of workers in skilled and well-organised trades, who have every prospect of getting back into regular employment in a short time. All they need is some provision to tide them over the slack period; and such provision is already made by many trade unions in the form of out-of-work benefit. This form of mutual insurance, where it is possible, seems to be the most satisfactory way of dealing with Unemployment from the point of view both of the community and of the men themselves, but it has obvious limitations. It can only be applied when there is a trade union which can know what situations are available throughout the trade, and when the employment is sufficiently regular as a whole to prevent the trade union funds from being overburdened with "bad risks". It is impossible in the case of the unorganised and irregular trades where it is most needed. Nevertheless, the Minority Commissioners were considerably impressed with the advantages of the method of insurance against Unemployment, and recommended that a substantial Government grant should be given annually to those trade unions which pay out-of-work benefit. If this were done many more trade unions would be induced to take up or to improve this branch of

their provident activities, and thus relieve some of the pressure on the Labour Exchanges.

We are now face to face with the problem of how to provide for the heterogeneous residuum of men who are outside the scope of trade union insurance and for whom the Labour Exchanges can find no employment. It is clear that they and their families have got to be maintained by the community in one way or another. The question is what plan is really the most economical. The experience of the Poor-law debars us from proposing either indoor or outdoor relief, whether granted under lax or under deterrent conditions; the experience of the municipalities debars us from proposing relief works; and common sense debars us from proposing to leave a single unemployed man to the indiscriminate mercies of private charity. The provision, whatever it is, must be public and must be uniform. Further, it must be adequate, and it must be offered under such conditions as will not only prevent the deterioration, but will actually secure, as far as possible, the improvement of the moral fibre and the industrial efficiency of those who accept it. Finally, in order to safeguard the interests of the taxpayer, it must be so organised as to ensure the quickest possible reabsorption of these surplus workers into ordinary industrial employment.

The scheme set forth in the Minority Report fulfils all these requirements. It is proposed to set up a series of training establishments, to one or other of which every able-bodied man whose family is being maintained out of public funds would be assigned. Each man would be required to be in attendance at 6 A.M., as he would be in ordinary employment; and as the day's training would include organised recreation of various kinds, his obligatory attendance might well be prolonged until eight or nine at night. This plan of occupying each man all day long in an establishment where he could obtain plenty of mental and physical improvement, but none of those agreeable luxuries and stimulants which even the destitute contrive to obtain in the streets, would serve the double purpose of increasing the general health and efficiency of the men under treatment whilst preventing the training establishments from becoming too popular. Briefly, it will do them good; it will be more pleasant than being unemployed and unprovided for, but they won't like it so well as employment at wages; and thus we shall escape from the dilemma, which has always caught the destitution authorities, of dangerous eligibility on the one hand or excessive harshness on the other.

When this scheme of maintenance under training is established it will be possible to begin a process of careful testing and selection. The curriculum of the training establishments has yet to be worked out in detail, but we can foresee that it will include opportunities not only for mental and physical exercises of a generally improving nature, but also for each man to increase his skill in his own trade or to try his hand at another—perhaps, for instance, at the cultivation of land. It will therefore soon be quite feasible to sort the men out into different classes. Some would be found to be fairly efficient workers in one trade or another, and they would merely have to be kept up to the mark until the Labour Exchanges could find places for them. Others who had normally been employed in some seasonal trade or in a decaying industry already overstocked with labour would be taught some new occupation which would fit in with or replace their old one, thus facilitating the work of the Labour Exchanges in “dovetailing” seasonal trades and dealing with the ever-changing demand for labour. Others who were found to be incapacitated by physical or mental defects would be handed over to the Public Health or the Lunacy authorities for appropriate treatment. Others would doubtless show an aptitude for country life, and might, after training in a farm colony on the lines of Hollesley Bay, be established on small holdings. Others, again, who desired to try their fortunes in Canada or Australia or New Zealand might be assisted to emigrate. Finally, there would inevitably be some few individuals who, whilst capable of earning a livelihood, persistently refused to do so, and whom it would be possible for the first time to separate out from their fellows for special treatment. Such “work-shys” must be cured as soon as possible of the morbid state of mind which renders them incapable of filling a useful place in the industrial world. As soon, therefore, as they were found to be incorrigible under the easy conditions of the training establishments they would be committed by a judicial authority to a special reformatory detention colony, where the restrictions on personal liberty would be far greater and the work, without being of a penal character, would be compulsory.

No unemployed workman need be forced to enter any of these public institutions. So long as he commits no crime; so long as he does not fail to get food, lodging and clothing for his family; so long as none of his dependants are found to be neglected or destitute or in need of any form of public assistance, he will be free to live as he

likes. But directly he fails in any of his legal social obligations, he will be required, as a condition of receiving the help which will be given to his family, to attend at a training establishment; and if he is recalcitrant, he will be committed to a detention colony.

It must be clearly understood that, in dealing with the permanent army of the Unemployed, there is to be no question of creating work for a single man. He is simply to be trained in order to be ready for a job when it comes along in the ordinary way, and until it does come he and his family will have to be accepted as a charge upon the community—which, directly or indirectly, they are at present. But it should be remembered that the volume of industrial activity, and therefore of the demand for labour, at any given moment, is by no means a definite and unalterable quantity. It depends on a great number of different factors, not the least of which is the efficiency of the labour which is seeking to be utilised. As has been well said, "The capacity of the industrial system to absorb fresh labour is no doubt far from exhausted, but this capacity depends entirely upon the labour being of a sort to be absorbed". We have, therefore, good grounds for hoping that, with a system of industrial training establishments constantly in touch, through the Labour Exchanges, with all the demands and the particular developments of industry, a fresh impetus will be given to industry itself and fresh employment will be created in a perfectly natural and healthy manner. In any event, the proposed system will ensure that the public assistance which has to be given in any event will carry with it a minimum of demoralisation of the workers themselves; and, once the system is definitely established, the chief sources of supply from which the lowest section of the Unemployed is recruited will be cut off, and within a generation the specific problem of the Unemployable, as now presented in the forms due to the community's own neglect, will practically have ceased to exist.

So far we have dealt only with the permanent army of the Unemployed. It remains to consider the case of those who are thrown out of employment in the periods of depression which occur owing to cyclical fluctuations of industry. What is needed is the regularisation of the national demand for labour. We cannot hope to deal at present with the world-wide trade fluctuations themselves, since no one has yet completely succeeded in analysing their causes. In certain directions, however, we can manipulate the demand for labour in our own country so as to secure a fair degree of uniformity.

The proposal of the Minority Report is that the Government and the local authorities shall deliberately arrange part of their ordinary current expenditure upon public works on a ten years' programme. There can be no doubt that out of the 150 millions annually expended upon public works and services it would be possible to earmark a proportion, amounting to at least four millions a year, or forty millions in the decade which is the amount statistically found to be required, to be undertaken, not, as at present, in equal instalments year by year, but at times when the ordinary demand for labour was below the normal. Thus, when the National Labour Exchange reported that the number of able-bodied applicants for work was rising the works on the ten years' programme would be pushed forward rapidly, perhaps even to the extent in very bad times of ten or fifteen millions in a single year, whilst in times of brisk trade the programme might be at a standstill for twelve or eighteen months. Mr. Bowley, the eminent statistician, has estimated that the sum of forty millions expended in this way would have been sufficient to neutralise all the depressions in the labour market which have occurred during the last ten years. This plan would have none of the drawbacks of special relief works, since there would be no artificial creation of a demand for labour, but merely an adjustment of the ordinary demand. It would involve no expense, for the work is to be only such as would anyhow have been undertaken. The demand, moreover, would come through the ordinary trade sources before there was any considerable dearth of employment, and the most efficient men obtainable would be taken on at wages in the ordinary way.

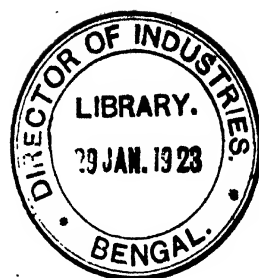
It is clear that the whole of this elaborate organisation for dealing with able-bodied men in distress from want of employment must be undertaken not by local authorities, but by a department of the national Government. The problem and its solution plainly transcend the powers or the scope of any body having jurisdiction only over a limited area. The Minority Report therefore proposes that in order to ensure complete Ministerial responsibility, the whole work should be entrusted to an entirely new department under a Minister for Labour. The department would include six divisions, each under its own assistant secretary: (1) The National Labour Exchange Division, (2) the Trade Insurance Division, (3) the Maintenance and Training Division, (4) the Industrial Regulation Division—which would take over the administration of all the laws relating to hours,

wages and conditions of employment at present divided between the Home Office and the Board of Trade—(5) a Statistical Division—taking over and extending the work of the present Labour Department of the Board of Trade—and (6) an Emigration and Immigration Division to which the Emigrants' Information Office and the administration of the Aliens Act would be transferred.

This elaborate scheme of national organisation for dealing with the great and grave social evil of Unemployment—which, it will be seen, draws together and combines into one whole the outcome of the numerous studies and experiments mentioned in the following list—may seem to many persons Utopian. We have grown so accustomed to the existence of able-bodied destitution that it is difficult to conceive of the total disappearance of this apparently inevitable incident in the life of an industrial community. Nevertheless, it is indisputable that Unemployment merely represents so much disorganisation, and must therefore be capable of treatment as soon as we really understand its causes. What is suggested is that those causes are now sufficiently understood for a very great deal to be achieved. What has now to be ascertained is whether our people will press for this to be done, and whether our legislators and administrators will cope with the task.

SIDNEY WEBB.

41 GROSVENOR ROAD,
WESTMINSTER, *September, 1909.*



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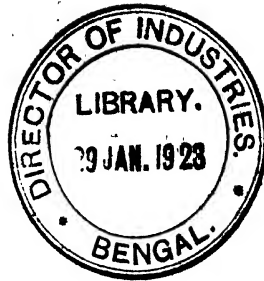
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